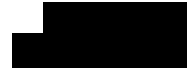


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## **\$18 MILLION IN HURRICANE RECOVERY GRANTS COMMITTED**

BILOXI, Mississippi -- The Board of Directors of the Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Fund has approved \$18 million in grant commitments to aid in the recovery process from the worst natural disaster in American history. Under decisions made on September 22, 2006, Long Term Recovery Committees in George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone Counties are targeted to receive grants to help bridge gaps in un-funded needs of residents.

Governor Haley Barbour, who created the Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Fund within a few days after Hurricane Katrina struck the state on August 29, 2005, said, "My intention in creating this special fund was to attract private monies to help victims of the hurricane with recovery costs that exceeded coverage from other sources, such as insurance, government grants, and immediate relief programs. Due to the generosity of people and companies from all around the world, the Fund's outstanding Board of Directors has allocated this \$18 million to help individuals with needs un-met by Federal funds."

Projects approved to receive grant commitments are:

- Disaster Recovery Services of George County, MS, will receive \$1.2 million for a Regional Resource Center to be located in Lucedale;
- Hancock County Long Term Recovery Committee, Harrison County Long Term Recovery Coalition, and Rebuild Jackson County will share in a \$15 million allotment to be used for individual housing assistance;
- Pearl River County Hope Committee will receive \$650,000 for a Regional Resource and Senior Center in Picayune;
- Stone County Long Term Recovery Committee will receive \$200,000 to fund housing repair projects.
- Additionally, non-profit organizations in Harrison County and Hancock County will receive \$400,000 and \$600,000, respectively, through each county's Long Term Recovery Committee to supplement other non-profit monies to build Community Resource Centers in the communities of DeLisle and Pearlnington.

Board Chairman Richard Hickson said, "As soon as these committees finalize the details of their requested projects, the Fund will begin meeting its commitments. The Board will monitor the spending of these funds to ensure accountability and that project dollars are

used to close the gap in un-met needs. The Board is ever mindful that we are the trustees of our contributors, a responsibility that we do not take lightly.”

These six Long Term Recovery Committees each represent a consortium of non-profits and faith-based organizations located within their counties. Identifying the funding gaps un-met by Federal or State recovery programs began on March 9 with the Governor’s Forum on Long Term Recovery hosted by the Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Fund. More than 250 organizations from the lower six counties were invited to discuss how to identify and fund the un-met needs in their local communities.

Following the forum, county committees came to together to communicate and coordinate ways to maximize the limited recovery resources available. Through this process these committees identified and prioritized the un-funded needs of their neighbors. The committees presented their requests to the Board in June.

The Board asked Governor Barbour to have all departments within State government review the committees’ needs requests to ensure none of the requests could qualify for Federal or State assistance. Following the State’s review, in early September, the Board met with each committee to gain additional understanding of each request. Following a two-week period of review, the Board made grant commitments in its September 22 meeting.

Governor Barbour expressed his gratitude to the Fund’s Board members and Officers, saying, “Each of you has given freely of your time and energy to create a transparent process that ensures proper management and accountability of this most important recovery task. I genuinely appreciate the outstanding work of Board Chairman Richard Hickson of Jackson; Board Members Royce Cumbest of Pascagoula, Peyton Self of Marks, Chevis Swetman of Biloxi, and Ray Wesson of Gulfport; and officers William T. Richardson, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer; J. Paul Varner, Secretary; and Mike Summerford, Treasurer. I also want the public to know that all of you served as volunteers in this important effort.”

The Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Fund has received more than \$18 million through the worldwide support of over 8,500 contributors. The Fund has benefited from three fund-raising events: The Mississippi Rising Concert in Oxford, a Culinary Reception in Jackson, and the Governor’s Cup Golf Tournament at Old Waverly Golf Club, West Point. In addition, the Bush Clinton Katrina Fund has pledged and is in the final process of releasing \$12.4 million to the Fund.

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